



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Scottish Trunk Road Network

Customer Care Strategy

2023

Contents

Foreword..... 3

Introduction 4

 Our Organisation 4

 Who are we? 4

 The Customer Care Strategy 6

 What does customer care mean to us?..... 6

 Purpose of this strategy 6

Vision for the Future 9

 Principles 9

Our Customers 10

 Who are our Customers?..... 10

Approach to Customer Care 12

 What we do..... 12

 What we are already doing well 13

Delivering our Vision 15

 Our plans for the future..... 15

 What will success look like?..... 17

How to provide feedback on our strategy 19

Foreword

We have built and maintained our infrastructure well for decades and are constantly challenging ourselves to do better. Our roads play a vital role in providing connectivity to communities, supporting jobs and businesses, social interaction, tourism and much more. In recent years, the nature of use of our roads has changed, with an increasing number of longer journeys on the Trunk Road Network. The rise of the 24-hour society and social media has created more opportunities and a variety of platforms for us to interact with our customers and take our customer care to the next level. As the Roads Directorate responsible for operating and maintaining the Network we already have good processes in place to care for our customers, however, to provide the best customer care possible, we need to build on these successes and move towards excellence.

Within the Roads Directorate, the vision is to have a strategic, joined-up approach to Customer Care, with a strong focus on communication to ensure we are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of our customers. We will develop an approach to Customer Care which expands on and improves our current interactions; both directly and through our supply chain, resulting in an improved customer experience and consistently positive perception of our service.

Our range of customers is extensive, including road users, Ministers, MSPs, and many businesses and organisations. Listening and responding appropriately to these customers is central to us achieving our objective and continuing to provide an effective service. We must understand and meet our customer's differing needs and manage issues effectively, both proactively and reactively. To achieve this, we have produced this Customer Care strategy using learning and good practice from within our sector and beyond, along with our customer and operational knowledge.

Getting Customer Care right means an honest and credible approach to Customer Care now and for the future.

Hugh Gillies

Director of Roads

October 2023

Introduction

Our Organisation

Who are we?

Transport Scotland is the national transport agency, delivering the Scottish Government's vision for transport and accountable to Parliament and the Public through the Scottish Ministers. Our purpose is to deliver a sustainable, inclusive, cost-efficient, safe, and accessible transport system for the benefit of the people of Scotland. We oversee:

- The operation and improvement of the trunk road, ferry, canal, and railway networks in Scotland
- Highlands and Islands and Prestwick airports
- The provision of rail and ferry services
- Enabling local authorities, operators and delivery partners to deliver sustainable, accessible bus services
- The promotion of walking, cycling and wheeling
- The decarbonisation of Scotland's transport system
- Securing air routes for Scotland
- National concessionary travel schemes
- The provision of network traffic and travel information services.

The Scottish Trunk Road Network

Within Transport Scotland, Roads Directorate is responsible for the Trunk Road Network, a fundamental part of the transport system in Scotland, which supports the Scottish Government's Purpose to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

The Trunk Road Network is comprised of route corridors that are of strategic importance to the economic stability and growth and social wellbeing of Scotland. The Trunk Road Network is vital because it connects our cities, rural communities and the ports that serve the islands.

For the Trunk Road Network to fulfil its potential, it is vital that it is effectively maintained and efficiently managed. This includes not just carriageways and footways, but also bridges, lighting, traffic signs, drainage networks and much else besides. The Scottish Government and Transport Scotland are committed to ensuring the Trunk Road Network is maintained in a manner that supports its vision, aims and objectives.

Our Customer Interactions

We, together with our partners (organisations who work with us and on our behalf) interact with our customers for the following purposes:

To inform

- Providing information on our Network, what we are doing and why we are doing it

To consult

- Hearing our customers' views on particular issues or schemes

To help

- Providing education on using our Network safely and effectively

To respond

- Addressing specific customer questions and queries

Our customers may choose to contact us for the following reasons:

To understand

- Finding out about the Network and/or the work we do

To report

- Providing information to us related to the network

To feedback

- Raising complaints or providing compliments

Our customers may interact with us directly or through the Operating Companies (OC) that work on our behalf through agreed contracts to maintain and support the Trunk Road Network. They work towards the same strategic vision and the same requirement for consistent and high-quality customer care. The OCs are split by geographic location as can be seen on our [Network map](#).

We use a variety of means to interact with customers, with some common methods including websites, social media, and radio. Our OCs may communicate with customers using methods such as community groups, signage on the road network

or getting in touch with the customer directly. Our customers may use telephone, email or online systems depending on their own preferences.

The Customer Care Strategy

Providing the best service possible to our customers is at the heart of Transport Scotland, and everyone who delivers our services plays a part. This strategy brings together all our existing good work and improvements where necessary, ensuring this is embedded throughout everything we do in the future.

What does customer care mean to us?

Customer care is at the heart of our service and is one of our [seven asset management objectives for the Trunk Road Network](#). These objectives reflect our business responsibilities and activities and align with our priorities and that of the Scottish Government.

For customer care, our aligned objective is to:

Provide customers with up-to-date reliable travel information and support the level of satisfaction in trunk road services.

Customer care involves developing the correct approach to understanding and engaging with our customers, thereby allowing us to provide a service that fully meets their needs and delivers a **'customer centric'** approach to customer engagement.

By measuring our performance against asset management objectives, we can demonstrate how we achieve these priorities.

Purpose of this strategy

Through this strategy, Roads Directorate, being responsible for operating and maintaining the Network, sets out the vision and principles for how we will deliver the best customer care possible, stating our aspirations for the future of customer care across the Network and how we will achieve this. With a clear, strong commitment from our senior leaders, we will work with a range of our staff and with our partners to identify the actions required to deliver this vision, continually challenging ourselves to improve, taking practical steps to do so and measuring our success.

We recognise that every individual has a responsibility to deliver the vision outlined in this strategy. This means that each member of staff will tailor customer care to align with their role and we will help them to do this.

Figure 1 shows how this customer care strategy aligns with our asset management objectives and our overall vision.

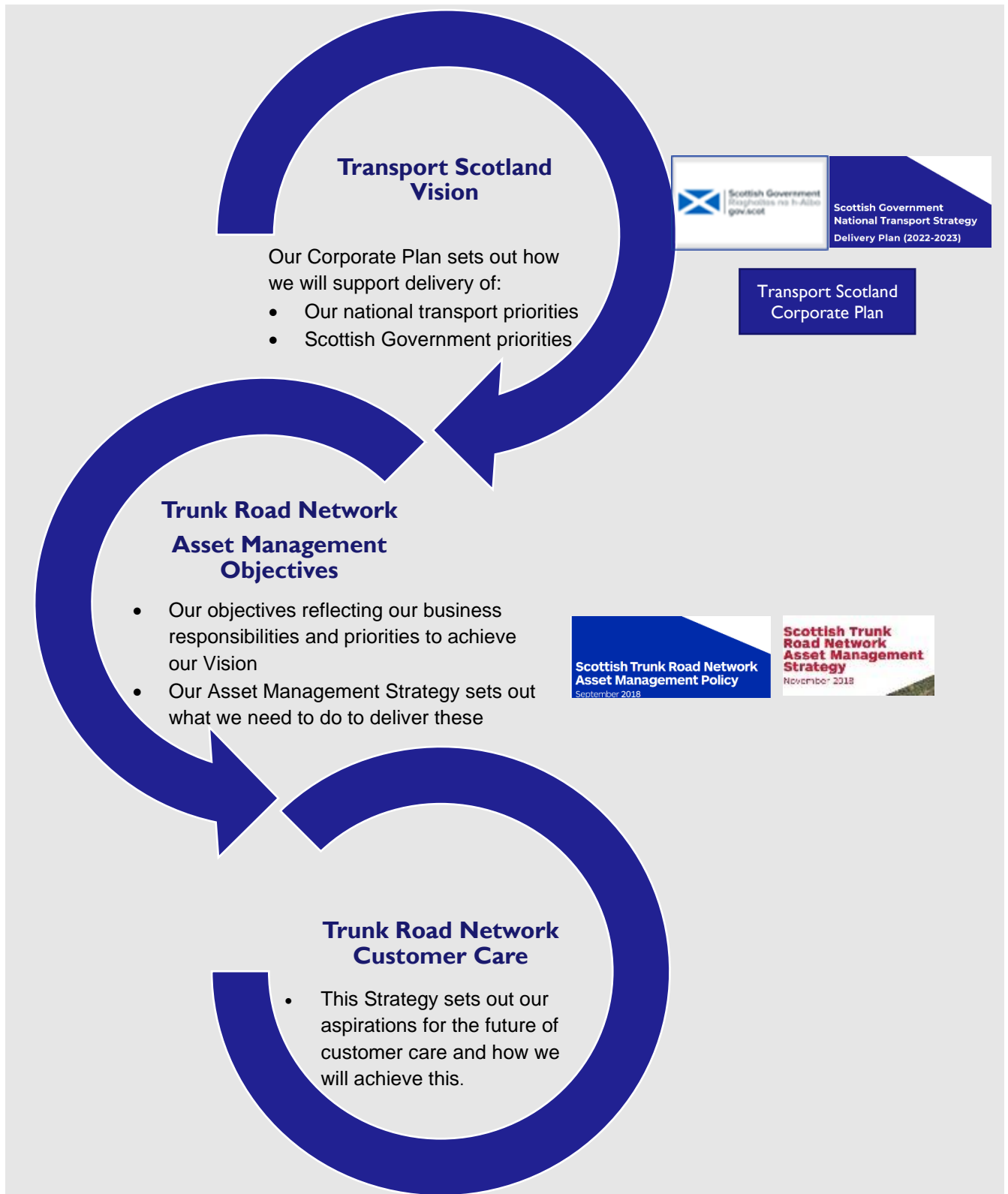





Figure 1: Alignment of our Trunk Road Network Customer Care Strategy

Vision for the Future

Transport Scotland will be recognised and trusted by our customers, through clear communication with and genuine listening to everyone who is reliant on the Trunk Road Network. We will be better known, and this will be core to enhancing a customer-centric approach throughout our wider management and delivery of the Network.

Principles

Our approach to Customer Care is centred around three key principles:

 Proactive Communication	Sharing information that is easy to access and understand
<p>Clear, precise, and accessible information will be proactively published, providing customers with the context and responses to their enquiries, reducing the need to request such information. This will provide a more transparent and accessible service to customers and support our teams together and individually in providing a more efficient and effective response to customer correspondence, due to relevant information being readily identifiable and available to all.</p>	
 Consistency	In the interactions they have with us and the service delivered
<p>We will ensure that each customer receives the same high level of Customer Care, regardless of who they are, where they live and their communication preferences. It is important that all our customers are left with a positive perception of Transport Scotland after they have engaged with us, and they are content that every effort was made to resolve any issue and that they received the best quality of service.</p>	
 Joined-up approach	Customers perceive the different teams and partners that improve, maintain, and operate the Trunk Road Network to be working together efficiently with effective internal communication
<p>We, alongside those we work with, will be perceived to operate together, providing customers with the confidence that their enquiry or complaint will be handled effectively, irrespective of the department or team that they initially engage with. To achieve this, every individual delivering our services on the Network will be encouraged to take ownership for always delivering excellent customer care. Our people will be empowered to take this responsibility through engagement support and training relevant to their role.</p>	

Our Customers

Our customers are any individuals, group, or organisation that relies on or is supported by the Scottish Trunk Road Network in any way.

Who are our Customers?

We have an extensive range of customers, and it is important to not only think of the customer as the road user, but all those living, working in and visiting Scotland. Our customers include users such as drivers, cyclists, and passengers, through to communities living close to our Network, businesses that rely on and interact with our Network, and ultimately the Scottish Government.



We expect that the benefits from this strategy will more directly impact road users and neighbouring communities due to the nature of their typical interactions with us. Other types of customer will also benefit from these improvements due to an enhanced overall standard of customer care.

We recognise that every customer is unique. This means that each customer will have a different set of factors contributing to their requirements and expectations. By understanding how these factors affect the demands of our customers, we can deliver a service and a Network that meets their expectations. Whilst these factors vary across our customers, they can be broadly grouped into four key areas;

Who our customers are

- The needs and preferences of our customers are varied and have different demands for the Network
- They require a road network that is safe, accessible and supports economic growth
- They expect consistent customer service, which is flexible as needed and understands evolving needs

Where our customers live and travel

- Our Network should support the whole of Scotland and its citizens, and geographic location should not be a limiting factor to the standard of service received by customers
- We recognise the value and importance that the Network has across Scotland whilst also understanding the varying types of customer engagement that are most suitable in different locations
- It is important to use an appropriate approach for each customer or group (e.g. frequent personalised engagement in rural areas to ensure customers are listened to), whilst maintaining consistency in the service provided

Why our customers need the Network

- There is a need to recognise the common journey types made by our customers and the Network's importance for community connectivity, supporting jobs and the economy, social interaction or tourism
- Demographic and geographic location, amongst others, are two key factors that contribute to the journey types that are most commonly made by our customers
- In understanding customer travelling habits, Transport Scotland can not only provide a road network that meets their needs of today, but also support us in determining how best to meet their future needs

How our customers want to be communicated with

- We need to recognise, appreciate, and understand the varying preferences that customers have for interacting with us.
- We should be easy to communicate with, by traditional means such as letters and face-to-face engagement, or digital means such as social media
- Our customer service should be accessible and responsive to all

Approach to Customer Care

We are already committed to communicating with our customers in different ways. Continued improvements are planned across these existing activities plus the introduction of new ways of engagement to 'join the dots' and enhance the care we provide to our customers.

What we do

Our interactions with our customers focus on our four themes in this strategy – to inform, to consult, to help, and to respond. We use a range of different ways of communicating and activities to engage with our customers, and some examples of these are described below:

To Inform

- We provide information displayed on the Network, for all our road users to access as they make their journeys. This includes our fixed signage outlining speed limits, directions and distances, temporary signs where work is taking place on the Network, and Variable Message Signs giving the very latest updates.
- We also use online resources such as dedicated websites or social media. For example, the [Gritter Tracker page](#) provides live tracking of gritters on the Trunk Road Network, while Traffic Scotland has multiple mediums that it can provide information through.
- Our information helps our customers to understand how the Network is operating, what work we are doing and why we are doing it.



To Consult

- Our road user surveys provide us with a broad range of views and opinions to inform the management of the Trunk Road Network and identified current road user priorities and satisfaction levels.
- We also deliver specific scheme consultations where we go out into the communities neighbouring our Network or where proposed changes will impact

on them, so we can test out options with our customers and build their views into our planning processes.

- Customers can also use facilities to notify us of issues on the Network, for example defects can be reported through our Customer Care Line.
- Our customers can use these interactions to report issues on the Network and provide feedback on our work.

To Help

- We provide information about what we do and how we do it to aid understanding of our services.
- We also encourage behaviours and measures that our customers should be considering for their own benefit as well as others. For example, we have an extensive road safety programme, and this delivers a range of campaigns through various forms, such as messaging through media platforms, Variable Message Signs, and sessions in the community.
- Other themes of benefit to our customers include the take up of Active Travel and responding to Climate Change.
- Our work in this area helps our customers to understand how to use our Network as safely and effectively as possible.

To Respond

- Our customers contact us using a range of methods, depending on their request and their preferred form of communication. We can respond immediately to those calling on the telephone to our Traffic Scotland Customer Care Line and reply in a timely manner to queries via email or post.
- We also monitor and respond to questions or issues via social media.
- As our customer base is more than just individual road users, we also respond to politicians' requests for information to support the governance of our service, and from businesses who need information to plan their activities.
- Our response to customers who enquire about our work will feel listened to and receive a response that they understand.

What we are already doing well

Within the Roads Directorate there are several existing processes, methods, and platforms in place to deliver effective Customer Care and strong progress has already been made in this regard.

Social media engagement is one aspect of Customer Care that has improved significantly in recent years, with Transport Scotland recognising the need to adapt to the additional customer demands and expectations that the advent of social media

has brought. The Traffic Scotland Information Service has a large following on social media platforms, and we frequently engage with our customers via these, providing network updates and other relevant information.

Engagement with customers, both via social media and more conventional means, to provide accurate and informative updates regarding incidents or works that have a significant impact on the Network is something of which we are proud. With our partners, we aim to not only inform of such events, but proactively provide disruption updates and ensure the reasons for significant work and subsequent closures are effectively communicated and understood by our customers.

We have been engaging with our customers through a series of road user perception surveys for over a decade now. This enables us to ensure our business aims, objectives and targets continue to align with our customers' priorities and expectations. As part of this survey, customers are also asked about the access, usage, and perceptions of the information we provide.

Additionally, we take pride in how effectively we respond to customer enquires within the required timescales that we have set ourselves. Performance in this regard is proactively monitored and significant efforts are made to ensure that we are considered a responsive organisation, that cares about resolving our customer's unique queries and issues relating to the Network, whenever possible.



Progress has been made with respect to ensuring a collective responsibility to delivering excellent Customer Care is adopted, not least through the operational and maintenance activities undertaken by our OCs. They have a significant focus on Customer Care through designated roles, regular monitoring, and reporting, developing innovative solutions for improving customer care and ensuring overall customer satisfaction. These are all vitally important given the level of direct interaction between our OCs and our customers. Ensuring that these contractual requirements are delivered is a key focus for our Customer Care approach.

We recognise that it is important that we build on these practices that are already established and continue to adopt a proactive, forward-thinking approach towards developing the service provided to our customers.

Delivering our Vision

We are committing to a plan of action to improve our approach to customer care. We will develop a set of clear, relatable measures to understand and evaluate our progress and use appropriate methods to keep our customers informed on the steps we're taking. We will set ourselves targets to make sure that we deliver to the level our customers expect and demand. This will help us understand where we are performing well, and where we need to focus future efforts.

Our plans for the future

We will strengthen the alignment we have between this Customer Care Strategy and our strategic objectives, to demonstrate how this strategy not only supports our customers, but also the delivery of our priorities and vision.

Through developing a focused, structured, and prioritised action plan, we will undertake a series of specific actions to deliver our vision and strategy. Identifying our good practices and immediate improvement actions we can implement.

We recognise improving our customer care approach is an ongoing and iterative task and we will continue to gather and gain insights from our customers to evolve and improve our plans through listening. Our action plan will be for all our teams, with everyone working together to enable an improved and sustainable service to our customers.

Our Actions



Proactive Communication

- We will improve how our diverse range of customers can contact us as and when they need to, establishing two-way engagement for Customer Care.
- Enhance our understanding of our customer's experiences and satisfaction of engagement and customer service they receive, how their needs are currently met, and where improvements are needed.
- Communicating effectively in a clear, and accessible way, using customer-friendly language across our platforms and ways of engaging. It is easy to assume that our customers understand the technical 'speak' that is natural for us to use; for many customers this is not the case.



Consistency

- Review the effectiveness of the communication channels and platforms available to our customers when they need to contact us. This will enable improved clarity and convenience of how to contact us regarding their experiences or requirements of the Network.
- Ensuring our future contracts with our partners bring consistency to the Customer Care delivered by those who work with us.
- Create targeted measures for Customer Care to understand our performance and where improvements are needed through monitoring and measuring ourselves and our partners.



Joined-up approach

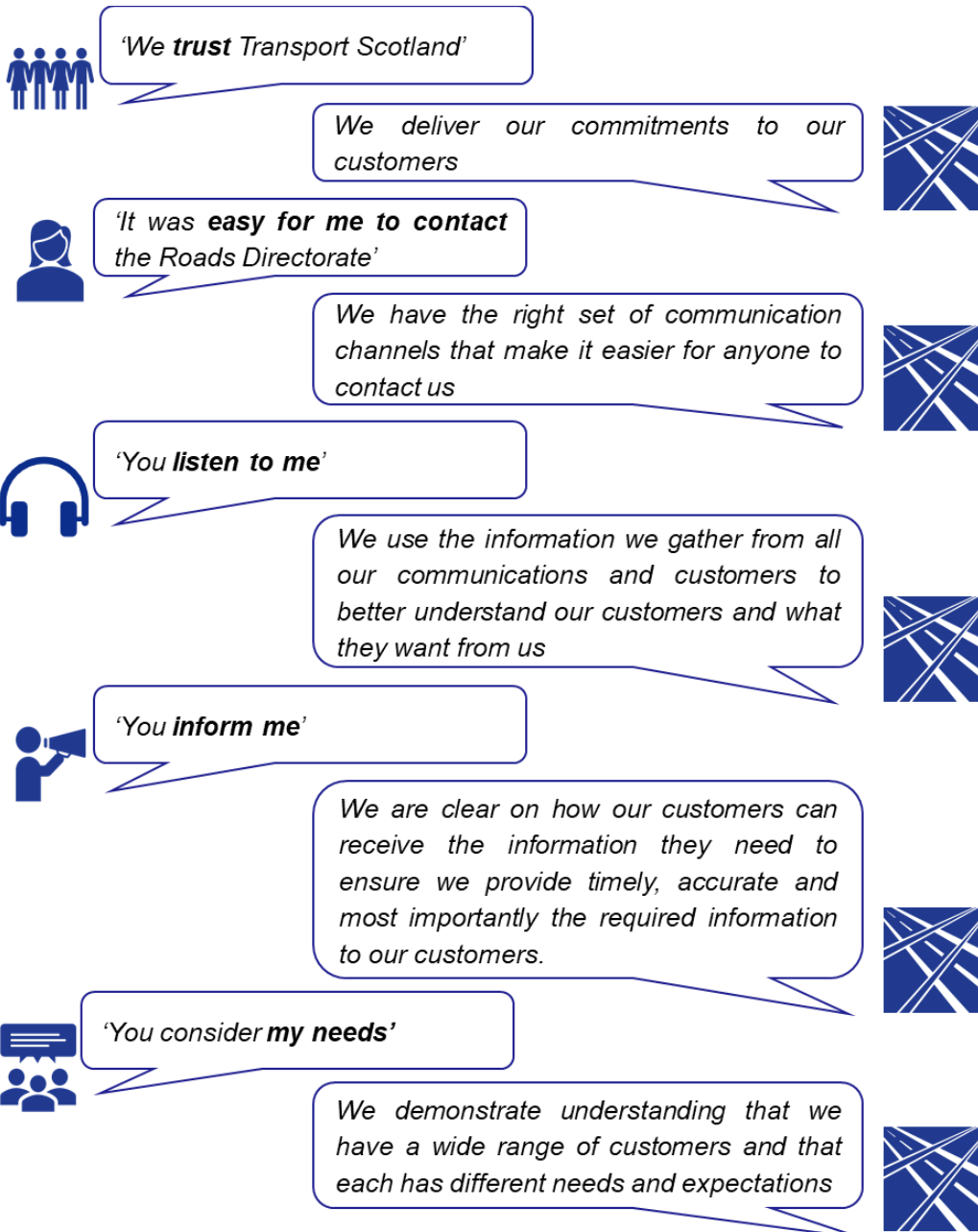
- Ensuring our people, and those who work with us understand their role in providing an excellent Customer Care service.
- Identifying and assessing the required skills and qualities needed and have the appropriate training, support, processes, and tools to deliver this.

What will success look like?

Delivering our vision for Customer Care will form part of everybody's day-to-day responsibilities and we will continue developing an environment and ways-of-working within our teams that encourages a collective responsibility of delivering excellent Customer Care in everything we do.

We understand that defining success with respect to Customer Care is challenging and appreciate that getting it right is a continuous process, one where we can always improve and provide a better service to our customers.

We will know we have got it right when our customers tell us that:



How to provide feedback on our strategy

We actively want to hear your thoughts on this strategy document and the service we provide to you, our customers. For more information, please contact info@transport.gov.scot.



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**

CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

© Crown copyright 2023

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence> or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Further copies of this document are available, on request, in audio and visual formats and in community languages. Any enquiries regarding this document / publication should be sent to us at info@transport.gov.scot

This document is also available on the Transport Scotland website: www.transport.gov.scot

Published by Transport Scotland, January 2024

Follow us:



transcotland



@transcotland

transport.gov.scot